



NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS: WESTERN NEW YORK

EAST SIDE



Derek Gee/Buffalo News

Kevin Matheis of the Environmental Protection Agency examines debris Wednesday inside the old Sweet Kleen Laundry on Kensington Avenue.

EPA starts cleanup at Sweet Kleen site

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A collapsed roof, mixed with the asbestos-contaminated materials that fell with it, lies splattered inside the walls, while rusting industrial drums are stacked on a loading dock outside.

The former Sweet Kleen Laundry on Kensington Avenue opened in 1925 and was abandoned by its owners about 1990, leaving behind a toxic eyesore that will cost taxpayers \$600,000 to clean up.

The money comes from the federal Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund, set up to clean hazardous

waste sites across the country.

EPA spokesman Mike Basile said Wednesday there have been at least 10 such cleanups in Erie and Niagara counties over the last five years.

"We've spent \$13 million on those cleanups," Basile said.

The cleanup began Tuesday with the dismantling of a 100-foot brick chimney, but EPA on-scene coordinator Keith Matheis said the most challenging work will involve removing asbestos and about 20 drums of oils, solvents, detergent and electrical transformers.

The asbestos removal is tricky, he said, because some of it was on pipes

that crashed to the floor when the roof collapsed. Where possible, asbestos-coated pipe will be sprayed with a sealant before being removed, but "some of it is just going to be sent off-site as asbestos-contaminated debris," Matheis said.

Much of the building will be removed by mid-August, Matheis said. Removal of soil contaminated with the common dry-cleaning solvent tetrachloroethylene will start after that.

"We expect that by the end of the year, we should have the whole property cleaned up," Matheis said.

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